

THE
WIDOWED QUEEN:

A P O E M.

AND,

PHILIPPA TO EDWARD III.

A N O R A T I O N.

2
The Queen's
Dress



THE
WIDOWED QUEEN:

OR,

ELIZABETH,

DOWAGER OF EDWARD IV.

DELIVERING UP

HER SECOND SON FROM SANCTUARY:

AND,

PHILIPPA TO EDWARD III.

IN FAVOUR OF THE

BURGHERS OF CALAIS.

BEING

A POEM, AND ORATION,

TO WHICH

PRIZES WERE ADJUDGED

BY THE

PROVOST and SENIOR-FELLOWS of TRINITY-COLLEGE, DUBLIN,

IN HILARY TERM, 1777.

WRITTEN BY JEROM ALLEY.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY ROBERT MARCHBANK, COLE-ALLEY, CASTLE-STREET.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,
JOHN HELY HUTCHINSON, ESQ. L.L.D.

REPRESENTATIVE IN PARLIAMENT FOR THE CITY OF CORK,

PROVOST OF TRINITY-COLLEGE, DUBLIN,

AND

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL.

O D E.

HOW oft, where woodbines fling their shade,
With many a clust'ring rose conjoin'd,
And where, full many a flow'r, from Spring purloin'd,
Breathes fragrancy, my muse essay'd
To court wild Fancy, her, the plastic maid,
Upon whose plume, with new delight,
The Mind may wing her various flight,

O'er the slope of sunny hills,
Through the fields of daffodils,
By the fountain, by the stream,
Where the Loves are wont to dream,
Or where Echo's dirge is sung;
Or, with darkling ivy hung,
Near yon consecrated spot,
Where appears the hermit's grot?

II.

How oft she fram'd her pipe to play,
When, in his bloom of vigorous youth, the Morn
In orient skies awoke the day,
And bade the huntsman wind his early horn:
How oft she fram'd her pipe to play,
When dewy Evening bath'd each drooping plant;
When twilight eked the dubious day,
And red-breasts trill'd their sweet responsive chant?

III.

But ah! as from yon thorn
The lonely linnet, now,
In notes that mock the pride of labouring art,
To young and roscate Morn,
Repeats her early vow,

And tells the raptures of a moderate heart ;
So, still, she sung
To dell, or woodland, or where streamlets flow ;

No ear
To hear,
No honied tongue

The feast of commendation to bestow ;
'Till call'd from rustic privacy,
O friend of science ! Hutchinson, by thee,
By thee, and thy illustrious band, *
Whose fost'ring care, whose cultivating hand,
Bids that fair plant of heavenly seed,
Genius ! which shames each rose,
On Nature's breast that blows,
In lustihood its every charm expand,
And on ambrosial dews of praise to feed !

IV.

She heard thee, and, renouncing numbers
That only sooth'd the shepherd's slumbers,
In notes of length that slowly flow,
First sacrific'd to widow'd woe.
O ! then, accept the artless lay,
By nature taught to mourn for Gray,

* The Fellows of the college.

Nor taught in vain, since thou didst hear,
Whose heart can share the pitying tear,
And knows how best itself to bless
By sympathizing with distress !
Friend of my youth ! thou unsought friend,
Whom gratitude shall still commend !
Thou, who, unask'd as flows each ray,
From yonder golden source of day,
Didst pour upon my eager mind,
The living light of council kind !
By thee be won, as still 'tis woo'd,
Each hallow'd bliss of doing good ;
Be thine, through life, that cherub guest
Content, that lulls each Care to rest,
And Peace, as mild as nestling dove,
And Friendship's joys, and home-born Love ;
And, as the sum of all that good,
Which but by Worth is understood,
Rest satisfied with that supreme applause,
Which Heaven approves, and man from conscience draws.

JEROM ALLEY.

T O
J E R O M A L L E Y.
O D E.

OCCASIONED BY
HIS HAVING OBTAINED PRIZES FOR AN
ENGLISH POEM AND ORATION.*

I.

W H I L E rigid Justice owns thy art,
While Genius lauds thy bold pursuit,
Shall cold indifference freeze my heart,
Ah ! shall a brother's tongue lie mute ?

b

* The institution of literary prizes affords a striking testimony of the indefatigable attention of the Provost and Senior-Fellows of Trinity-college, to the interests of learning, and the improvement of Taste : and, the essays which have been produced in consequence thereof, sufficiently evince, what happy effects may be expected to arise, from encouraging a generous emulation in the students, by a frequent distribution of such public rewards, to classical merit.

x

O D E.

II.

Shall I not wake one artless lay,
The lay thy early merits claim,
At once an honest debt to pay,
And urge thy onward course to fame?

III.

Yes! yes!—though Fashion I offend,
That idiot, Reason scorns to view—
At Nature's sacred shrine, I bend,
And feast my heart by praising you!

IV.

Delicious feast! if praise excite
Thy warmer love of honour's name;
Since those, Fame's cherub voice who flight,
Slight Virtue's self, the soul of Fame!

V.

Win that—and tho' thou may'st not share
The splendors of a titled line;
And tho' our honour'd parents, ne'er,
Enjoy'd access to Peru's mine;

VI.

Yet shall thy breast not heave the sigh
For puny shew, or hoarded pelf
Of niggard souls, whose sickly eye
For ever inward squints on self.

VII.

O! labour, then, thy eaglet-plume,
And greatly dare each arduous height;
Whilst I, from Fancy's vale, presume,
Alone to gaze upon thy flight:

VIII.

I, who, erewhile, full oft essay'd,
To give thy opening genius pow'r ;
But weak my skill ! 'twas that chaste maid,
Sweet Nature ! nurst the tender flow'r.

IX.

Ah ! wist I then that in thy mind,
As in its mine, the di'mond lay,
Which learning's sapient sons should find,
And give to beam a lesser day ?

X.

Then, tell what equal boon to thee,
In her best mood, could Fortune lend,
Since Hutchinson hath deign'd to be
Thy Muse's guardian, and thy friend ; *

* The generous and unsolicited instances of regard, conferred by the Provost, on a youth scarce known in the college, and in a manner that spoke the truly enlarged and benevolent mind, may justly be considered as assurances to the diligent student, that genius and industry are sure recommendations to his favours.

XI.

And he, besides, the learned Sage †
Who, from Antiquity's rich ore,
Best knows what labours to engage,
For wisdom to extract a store?

XII.

Since these, with those the letter'd train, ‡
To Alma's gentlest loves endear'd,
With wholesome praise have nurs'd thy strain,
And all thy timid wishes chear'd;

XIII.

What shouldst thou, but with caution roam
The classic way, they point to thee,
Where Taste enjoys her Dorian home,
With her sweet guest, Simplicity;

† Doctor Leland.

‡ The Fellows of the college.

XIV.

Where roves, with cherub Virtue, Fame,
Whose splendors ne'er shall know decay,
But, like the sun's exhaustless beam,
Shed lustre on each coming day?

XV.

By all the feelings of a heart,
Where many a tender weakness dwells;
By all that tears can e'er impart,
And more than fondest language tells;

XVI.

By all my late, my anxious pray'rs
That thou the laureate-wreath shouldst gain;
By all thy parents tender cares,
Which words want meaning to explain!

XVII.

Thee wooe I, 'gainst each idle joy
To urge the bold determined strife ;
Shew manhood in the beardless boy ; *
Shew summer-fruits in spring of life !

XVIII.

So, thou, by virtuous toil, shalt see
How happiness with fame is bought ;
So, may I live to learn from thee,
How Horace wrote and Virgil thought.

* The Author of the Oration, &c. is but in his eighteenth year.



THE
WIDOWED QUEEN:

OR,

ELIZABETH,

DOWAGER OF EDWARD IV.

DELIVERING UP

HER SECOND SON FROM SANCTUARY.

A

P O E M.

B



ELIZABETH GRAY, Dowager of Edward IV. upon the decline of her party, and the imprisonment of her brother, the Earl of Rivers, by order of Gloucester, the Regent of England, took sanctuary in Westminster-Abbey, with her second son, the Duke of York, and other of her children. The consequences that followed this event, afford the subject matter of the ensuing Poem.

T H E
W I D O W E D Q U E E N :

A P O E M.

TH E E, sweet Simplicity, a youth invokes
For generous aid, who lately joy'd to rove
In shepherd's trim, with past'ral crook and pipe
Inglorious, or along the vi'let bank
Of tinkling brook, or 'neath the poplar shade,
Wistful to soothe thy parent Nature's ear,
With untaught strains of humblest minstrelsy ;
But now aspires (perchance too rashly so)
To win the heart not churlish of a tear.
Whether, with eager care, the daisy gay,
Or dappled lilack, on yon fragrant mount,
Sweet cottager ! thou cull'st ; such as, ere while,
To pensive Gay, when on thy breast reclin'd,
To sing of black-ey'd Susan's grief, thou gav'st ;

4 THE WIDOWED QUEEN.

Or whether, busied in some secret grot,
Through which, in many a maze, the limpid brook
Still warbling, wanders o'er its pebbled floor,
To me, O come ! O come to me ! and teach
The native eloquence of tuneful song !

Nor, if my wishes might avail, should'st thou,
Staid power of History, be absent long ;
But, seated in thine adamantine car,
Majestically plain thou should'st appear
With tablets in thine hand, where, fairly wrote
By Time's strict pen, the rules of life are seen ;
A deathless laurel should enwreath thy brow,
And thy fair breast of ivory appear,
But as the shrine, where hoar Antiquity,
The letter'd sage, his treasures had repos'd.

Lo ! yonder abbey, through whose gloomy aisles,
Depress'd, pale, haggard Melancholy stalks,
And Sorrow, that rejects a measur'd grief !
Would'st thou its cloisters rove ? Thou shalt not rove,
If generous sympathy can touch thine heart,
Without bestowing many a tear on woe.



But, mark yon altar! in lone majesty,
 Unhappiness herself there fighting fits,
 Pensive and sad! there royal Edward's queen
 Broods o'er her alter'd fortune! now, those smiles,
 Which once diffus'd delight, are drown'd in tears,
 Scarce pitied! scarce lamented! for, alas!
 Friendship oft ends where wretchedness begins!
 No more those 'witching strains, which Fancy's self
 Harp'd through the palace, touch her drooping soul,
 And warble care to rest! No more she counts
 The Graces in her train, each rosy Grace
 That taught Love's gentle science to the soul
 Of Britain's king! but uncouth 'semblage dire
 Of drooping Care, and ever irksome Thought,
 And Misery intent to hoard her grief!—
 Ah! is there not an avarice in woe?
 For see! methinks the sadly silent queen
 Solicits every sorrow to herself!—
 Too lovely mourner! are thy plaintive tears
 To flow adown for ever? Shall thine eyes
 Recall their day no more? Shall not thy cheek,
 Once dimpled with the softness of content,
 Again display the rose's gayest hue,
 And, is the flower to die beneath the storm?

Say, whence the cause that innocence thus feels
 The shaft of sorrow? whence her tresses flow,
 Her golden tresses, that could rival erst
 The fair Diana's, negligent behind,
 Nor bound with glittering clasp? Tell, alas!
 Why does she weeping sit with folded hands,
 Why lift to heaven her eyes, and then, as ne'er
 To quit the object, fix them on her son?

Whilom, in Britain liv'd a valiant king,
 Fam'd, skilful or to arm the cornel spear
 With Death's pale terrors, or to guide the steel
 Swift to the heart, when fierce the battle rag'd:
 Edward, his name, a youth full often wont,
 On milk-white steed, with horns and hounds to lead
 Through devious woods, the dangers of the chase.
 Far from the scite where London rears aloft
 Her antique towers this passion led the king,
 Even to the rural scenes of Grafton's Wood,
 Where, deep embosom'd from the busy world,
 Stood thy fair mansion, Gray! * a happy home,

* Elizabeth, daughter of the Dutchess of Bedford, by Sir John Wideville, was first married to Sir John Gray.

And happy thou its queen, with dove-ey'd Peace
 And sober Quiet, for thy gentle guests!—
 And, now, the winding horn re-echoes nigh,
 The hounds pursue their course, the gen'rous steed
 Spurs back the plains, and Edward, led by chance,
 Views this retreat. Ah! little did he deem
 Of all that beauty which should quickly hold
 His heart in willing thraldom! Gray appear'd,
 And, with an unaffected ease, bespoke
 The youthful king.—He saw! he heard! he lov'd!
 But with no fleeting passion; for in her
 Were found, whate'er to sense or soul could yield
 Unceasing rapture; 'semblage meet that shone
 Fairest amid the fairest, yet, that shone
 Unconscious of its beauty! In her breast
 (As if internal merit would surpass
 External) like the di'mond set in gold,
 Fair Modesty sat mistress of her shrine.

Such graces triumph'd thus o'er Edward's soul;
 Who, doubtful or to feast his eager love,
 Or fly at once the magic of her charms,
 Would ponder oft, and often fondly say,
 Is not true virtue true nobility?

And, if 'tis noble, as that surely is
 Which bears the best similitude of heav'n,
 Then Gray, tho' cottage-born, would grace a throne.
 Yes! 'tis not haughty birth, nor ampler wealth
 Than either fruitful India could produce,
 Shall sway my mind, while reason governs there!
 Then, hence, ye grov'ling thoughts! hence, ye that rule
 Those slaves of fashion, who are yet to learn,
 Chance gives the throne, but heav'n must make the queen.
 Yes, lovely Gray! heav'n meant thee for a queen;
 And, had I fifty crowns, each should be thine;
 For, rather with such virtue would I live,
 Ev'n as a pilgrim with his staff and scrip,
 Content, beneath the humbler shed, to taste
 The sweetly-breathing herb and bev'rage pure
 From yonder brook, than on Britannia's throne,
 Elate, in all the majesty of kings,
 To wield the scepter, if it were not thine
 To share the sway!—Thus would the youthful king
 Enraptur'd speak, an advocate for charms,
 Whose eloquence but little needed aid
 To teach his soul the extacy of love.
 Alas! unhappy was his love for her,
 Who, hand in hand with Peace, might ramble now,

To care a stranger, o'er each happier scene,
 By Nature's rarest science taught to please,
 Had Royalty ne'er reach'd her rural home!
 Unhappy love for her! who now might wear
 Each gayest wreath that shepherd's skill could choose,
 From Spring's ripe treasures, nor have found the crowns
 Which Pomp affects, beset with wounding thorns;
 Nor, like the widow'd turtle, have to wail
 Her mate for ever lost! her Edward dead!
 Her royal fun for ever, ever set!

Unfriended, widow'd, conscious that the flame,
 Which curst Ambition kindled in the soul
 Of ruthless Richard, not the purple flood,
 From Edward's bleeding family could quench;
 While Virtue now at every vein expir'd,
 And Flattery bent the servile knee to Power,
 The weeping mother, with her infant race,
 Poor hapless wanderers! sought this sacred shrine.

But, ah! what barrier will Ambition brook?
 That fell Ambition, whose insatiate maw,
 Ev'n in fruition, feels a craving still!
 That fell Ambition, which bade Tarquin rise,

Which rais'd a Catiline to deluge Rome,
 And now bids Richard draw the murderous steel
 To sheath it in the bosom of a babe !
 Lo ! power is his, and Syren art, to lure
 Suspicion, tho' she boast an hundred eyes :
 He wields the sword of Tyranny elate,
 Curs'd with an heart that never knew the bliss
 To feel for woe ! whose pride infernal scorns
 Each fence that would seclude him from a crown.
 Let me, he cries, on Simulation's wing,
 O'er each obstruction, like the eagle, soar
 To Britain's throne !—What, tho' the eyes of Gray,
 With tears furcharg'd, should strive to teach my soul
 A mother's pangs ; what, tho' her lip essay
 To whisper to my breast what pity is ;
 'Tis mine to scoff at her,—to spurn at nature,
 And, shielded with insensibility,
 Pursue my onward course.—Go thou, my friend,
 (To York's archbishop thus he said) and bring
 The infant prince, whose mother much insults
 Our government, by these her ill-tim'd fears,
 And choice of sanctuary.—Edward's safe,
 And Edward's in the palace, England's king.
 Do thou, wise cardinal, attend, and hold

Such converse, as may dissipate the fears
 Which hang o'er Gray; for sure, it is not meet
 That fairest fruit should feel the nipping blast,
 But ripen i' the sun. Haste, then, my friends;
 And, if she listen not, say Richard's arm
 Must bear him thence; for it behoves me, thus,
 T' acquit my duty to a brother's son.—
 He spake, while in his heart the purpose fell
 Of deadliest hue lay hid; for, power acquir'd,
 He pants for more, and urges on his course,
 Regardless both of infamy and guilt.
 Thus, from the sloping side of craggy hill,
 Th' impetuous river bursts, and, swoln with rain,
 Its muddy torrent on the village pours,
 'Till all is desolation!—But, the queen,
 What curst ambition meditated knows,
 For, what can cheat a tender mother's fears?
 Full oft her mind revolves the grievous thought,
 Full oft her boy she snatches to her breast,
 And, silent, bodes his ruin. O! she cries,
 Look down, protecting Heaven! with pity's eye,
 With pity's eye, look down upon my babe,
 And save, O! save him from tyrannic power!—
 She pauses; for upon their brazen hinge

The gates unfold, while ruthless Fate prepares
 To give the last sad blow to Misery !
 Say, cries the queen, for Richard's friends approach,
 Or, have your gentle natures led you here,
 To pour your consolation on a wretch
 No stranger now to pain? or, are ye come
 To call down sacrilege upon a soul
 As vast and black as hell? Yes, hope is vain!
 Richard's insensible! and all my fears
 Proclaim the purpose of your errand here!—
 To whom, thus York—My queen, you wrong him much;
 Mild is his government; nor is it meet
 That ill-tim'd fears should urge, you, innocent,
 To seek the shrine, where criminals alone
 Might hope asylum from the hand of law.
 So says my lord protector, who invites
 You and your son to liberty and peace.
 Then hide not longer in a cloyster's round
 His early virtue fair; that virtue needs
 The skilful hand of education, still
 To aid its growth, and, as the blossom opes,
 To call forth all its beauty.—Yes, the queen.
 Thus hastily replies, the blossom's fair!
 Too fair, alas! for Richard's jaundic'd sight!

O! would its budding had been far from courts,
 Far from the blighting breath of envious Pomp,
 In Grafton's vale, in Grafton's peaceful home,
 With clinging ivy hung, whose doors would ope,
 But ope to Quiet, ope to true Content,
 My constant guests! with whom, at early morn,
 I often brush'd the dews from flowret sweet,
 Oft mark'd the peaceful progress of the stream,
 Which, had my soul been wise, then taught me well,
 To shun the sea in which Ambition toils.
 Alas! alas! how alter'd! how contemn'd!
 How wretched! how complete am I in woe!
 Lo! lo! my ways, which velvet once o'erspread,
 Are planted now with thorns! and every pain
 And every grief is mine!—Then, reverend sirs,
 If pity in your bosom dwells, return,
 For Richard's government you say is mild,
 And teach his soul to do one gentle deed,
 To spare my child! let feeling prayers obtain!
 Let Heaven command what Gray scarce dares to hope!
 And, tho' he snatches to his vile misrule
 The British scepter, I shall envy not,
 If one, poor, hapless woman with her babes,
 Her blameless babes! for whom, and whom alone

She sorrows thus, may sanctuary keep,
And ruminates upon their fallen fortune!

Trust me, the virtuous cardinal reply'd,
Trust me, unhappy queen! your infant son
Shall be the care of Providence, unhurt
'Mid all the tumult of a troubled court.
Then, weep not thus; forsake this dreary scene,
A scene unfitting thee, whose former day
Prosperity illum'd with brightest beams!
And let fond hope inform thy feeling soul,
Your son shall live, shall flourish in the care
Of those, who have the power and will to save
Him, the fair image of his royal sire!—
Oh! cries the queen, say that my child shall live!
Say he shall live! cast but one ray of hope!
One generous ray of hope! and I'll revere,
And call you saint or angel! Yet, my soul,
Still to itself exhibits direful scenes
Of various sorrow! various woe! and death!
And see! 'tis Richard's self! the tyrant stalks,
Studious of newer horrors! Lo! he glides
Along the paly aisles! But why, oh! why
Should all my chosen friends be doom'd to bleed

Beneath his direful power? why should they fall?
 The noble Rivers!—Pardon this poor tear;
 For many a tear to Rivers' fate is due;—
 And virtuous Gray! but burst not thou, my heart;—
 And generous Vaughan! Why should black Revenge,
 Why curst Ambition lift the sanguine arm,
 And feast upon the wailings of a world?
 No! no! my lords; here on the chilling stone
 We'll sigh our griefs, and, if the fix'd decree
 Of Providence denies us better fate,
 We here will rove the hollow cloyster's round,
 And teach our limbs to mock the whistling winds!

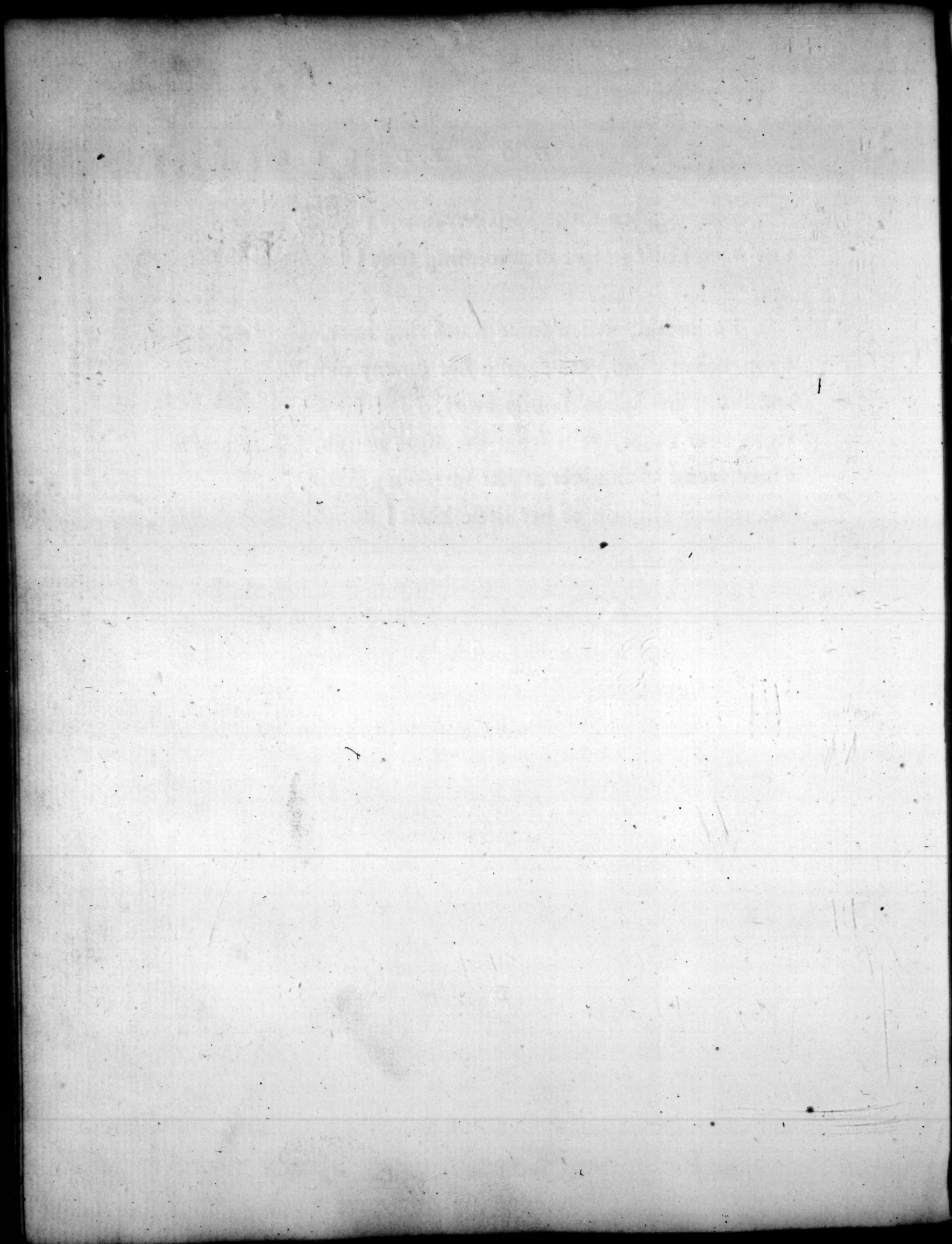
Oh! why, cry'd York, wilt thou, unhappy Gray!
 Refuse to our entreaties, what, by force,
 Richard shall sternly win? Think we are honest;
 Think that your son shall live, shall happ'ly live,
 In peace secure.—Then, be it so—she said,
 Since I am doom'd to ceaseless misery here!
 Am doom'd to live a monument of woe!
 Take! take my babe! and yet, can I pronounce,
 Farewell to him! farewell! farewell to him,
 Through whose young heart my all of life-blood flows!—
 But oh! I sicken—chilling dews creep o'er me—

It is!—mark, first—my Edward waves his hand!
 His look dejected! sorrow in his eyes!
 He comes to tell me, from the dreary tomb,
 My tender! blameless! infant lambs must bleed!—
 But, if they must—Hold! bloody villains, hold!
 Oh! slay the mother first, nor let her see
 Her infant martyrs smiling on their fate!—
 Alas! 'tis chaos all! I rave! I rave!
 And madness sure hath seiz'd on reason's seat.—
 'Then, hear me, Heav'n! hear, whilst I yet can pray!
 And grant the prayer a wretched mother makes!
 Let dire Ambition dread to lift the steel
 Against my babes; or, if the monster dare,
 Then let such palsies shake through all his nerves,
 As Impotence hath never known as yet!
 Let tearful Pity plead in all their looks,
 That Tyranny may sink to Penitence,
 And wonder at his adamant heart!
 And oh! still let their blameless manners thaw
 Insensibility's cold breast, and teach
 The wretch to feel, who never felt before.

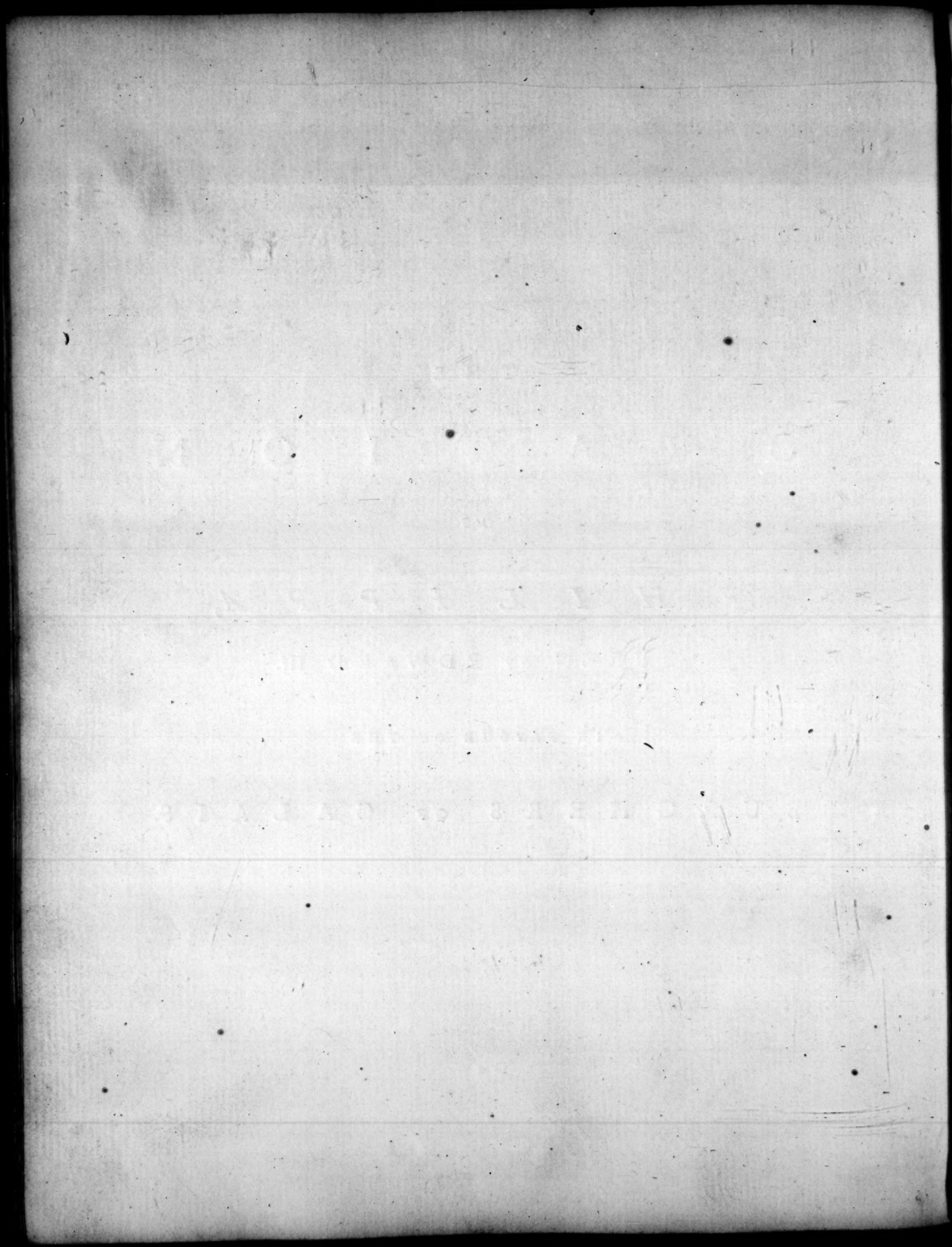
She says, and turns to gaze upon her babe;
 But ah! in pity, York has snatch'd him hence.

'Tis done! she cries, and sits her down t' enjoy
The wretched comfort of unceasing tears!

So Philomela, when some wand'ring boor,
With ruffian hand hath spoil'd her downy nest,
And borne her infant family away,
Night after night, tells from the aspin bough,
Which seems to shudder at her sorrowing strain,
The various anguish of her little heart!



THE
ORATION
OF
PHILIPPA,
QUEEN OF EDWARD III.
IN FAVOUR OF THE
BURGHERS OF CALAIS.



TO THE REVEREND

WILLIAM FORDE, M. A.

DEAR SIR,

SENSIBLE as I am of the profit, which, during the course of my education under you, I derived, as well from your conscientious attention to the discharge of the arduous and honourable duties of your station, as from your extensive ability in the formation, not only of the intellectual but moral lives of your pupils ; to whom, with any credit to myself, could I dedicate one of the first successful attempts of my pen, but to the gentleman who assisted, cherished, and directed my understanding, in almost every period of its progress, with the capacity of a Master, and the affection of a Friend ?

But, sir, besides those former debts, for which you have a claim upon my gratitude, there is a peculiar propriety in my addressing the following essay to you :—You were of the

number of my friends who first encouraged me to become a candidate for two of the prizes which were offered by the Provost and Fellows of our College ; you attentively read my preparatory sketches ; and, with the reverend William Richardson, my worthy tutor, favoured me with that approbation, which, in a great measure, encouraged my perseverance in erecting those slender monuments to the sufferings of Gray, and the magnanimity of Philippa.

Accept, then, what inclination, as much as duty, directs me to present ; and continue to believe that I am, with every sentiment of gratitude, affection and respect,

DEAR SIR,

YOUR FAITHFUL AND

MOST OBLIGED SERVANT,

JEROM ALLEY.

CALAIS had gallantly sustained a siege of near twelve months, when John de Vienne, a knight, as remarkable for courage as fidelity, was compelled, by the insupportable distresses of the garrison, to propose terms of capitulation to the besieger, Edward III. But, the king, being highly irritated by the obstinacy of their defence, refused granting them any thing more than life, and this too on the hard condition, that six of the principal Burgbers should become a sacrifice for the rest. On this occasion, Eustace de St. Pierre proposed himself as one; and, his illustrious example being soon followed by five others, the intended victims heroically marched out, naked to the shirt, with balts about their necks, and presented the conqueror with the keys of their city. This awful spectacle failed not to excite the tenderest emotions in the hearts of the British soldiery. The Prince of Wales and all the general officers interceded for the captives; but, Edward seeming inflexibly determined on their execution, Philippa, his queen, fell upon her knees, and is supposed to have addressed him in the following manner.

T H E
O R A T I O N

O F

P H I L I P P A,

QUEEN OF EDWARD III.

AL A S! my lord, have I lived to this inauspicious moment, but to behold you inflexibly determined on your own disgrace? Shall not the glorious efforts of your son be able to subdue one rash resolve in the breast of a father? And is it, my Edward, is it fixed for time to whisper to posterity, that the glorious conqueror at Cressy was repulsed in the cause of mercy?—My love! my life! 'tis Philippa speaks, she who would wish every thing for your glory, but almost fears to wish! she who has been already victorious for her king, and would now lead him to a victory, the most glorious heaven can reserve for the hero,—a victory over himself!—

E

CALAIS had gallantly sustained a siege of near twelve months, when John de Vienne, a knight, as remarkable for courage as fidelity, was compelled, by the insupportable distresses of the garrison, to propose terms of capitulation to the besieger, Edward III. But, the king, being highly irritated by the obstinacy of their defence, refused granting them any thing more than life, and this too on the hard condition, that six of the principal Burghers should become a sacrifice for the rest. On this occasion, Eustace de St. Pierre proposed himself as one; and, his illustrious example being soon followed by five others, the intended victims heroically marched out, naked to the shirt, with balters about their necks, and presented the conqueror with the keys of their city. This awful spectacle failed not to excite the tenderest emotions in the hearts of the British soldiery. The Prince of Wales and all the general officers interceded for the captives; but, Edward seeming inflexibly determined on their execution, Philippa, his queen, fell upon her knees, and is supposed to have addressed him in the following manner.

THE
O R A T I O N

OF

P H I L I P P A,

QUEEN OF EDWARD III.

AL A S! my lord, have I lived to this inauspicious moment, but to behold you inflexibly determined on your own disgrace? Shall not the glorious efforts of your son be able to subdue one rash resolve in the breast of a father? And is it, my Edward, is it fixed for time to whisper to posterity, that the glorious conqueror at Cressy was repulsed in the cause of mercy?—My love! my life! 'tis Philippa speaks, she who would wish every thing for your glory, but almost fears to wish! she who has been already victorious for her king, and would now lead him to a victory, the most glorious heaven can reserve for the hero,—a victory over himself!—

E

Hear me!—on my knees I conjure you, hear me! and, if there be aught of greatness that becomes, or of Pity that can soften the man in thy bosom, reject not the cause of illustrious wretchedness, for the inability of the pleader.

Let me invite you, my lord, to a retrospect of your reign: It exhibits a prospect of continued glory, which, Envy herself must acknowledge, is not to be excelled. While Honour—even she whom my fancy beholds as hovering o'er you on the wings of a cherubim, wishful to stay, yet ready to depart for ever—while Honour was your attendant, Justice was your guide; and though Mercy at times may have mourned at your decrees, she never frowned. No, my lord, though young, you were deliberate; though a steady, you were not a rigorous minister of the laws; you punished the vice, but lamented the man; and, even when most severe, the penalties you inflicted were mercies to the public.

Such was your early conduct; a review of which, methinks, might be capable of awakening you from a lethargy of virtue, and prevent your making a sacrifice of your fame, at the shrine of Passion, to a mistaken policy, or sanguinary revenge. Surely, my Edward, he, who, regardless of the voice, and fearless of the strength of a party, crushed

Tyranny in the person of a Mortimer, and, though it appeared in the form of a mother, drove Oppression from before the throne,* will not, now, when his reason is mellowed by experience, degenerate into a baser tyrant, and lose his own in the character of a more detestable oppressor.

You have hitherto been the impartial governor of a free, be now the equitable conqueror of a brave people: for, my lord, the rights of victory have, very often, but a weak foundation; one word explains them all. Strength, to-day, gives you authority, but superior strength, to-morrow, may snatch that authority from you, and place it in the hands of Philip. 'Tis true, indeed, France is yours of right, and you have fought, not like the imperial butcher of old, who deluged the world to gratify the frenzy of ambition, but to diffuse the happiness of a British government, over a territory, to which you have an indubitable claim. Yet, sir, remember, there are many in the number of your opponents, who consider you merely as an invader; as a soldier, whose pretensions exist but in the edge of his sword; as a king, whose ambition grasps at empire, and is indifferent by what means it is to be

E 2

* The perfidious Mortimer was arrested by the king's own hand, and shortly afterwards executed by the common hangman. In his ruin ended the misrule of Isabella the queen mother.

obtained. Can you, then, in the sober moments of reflection, authorise the world to say, its suspicions were justly founded, by condemning a people whose resistance proceeded from such heroic principles? a people, who, every inch of ground they dispute with you, prove themselves more worthy of participating those blessings which your heart is ample enough to bestow. Yes, my lord, fearful though I am of offending, I must still contend, you have not a shadow of authority over the lives of your prisoners. They owe you no fealty, for they have sworn you no allegiance: they opposed you from a principle of duty, and, by their opposition, proved themselves heroes.

But, my lord, supposing many of your opponents to be convinced of the justice of your cause; yet, can you think they could have conducted themselves but nearly as you have experienced? Power, such as Philip's, * will be obeyed, and little would it brook a contradiction to what it is determined to perform: Nor, were there a citizen, whom France had commanded to his standard, less prompted by interest than justice, to refuse such a command, would he escape punishment and constraint. Hence, it is, if their resistance was

* Philip, King of France.

founded on a principle of duty, they must merit, nay almost enforce your admiration ; but, if arising from the overbearing influence of compulsion, a tear, at least, is due to the fate of an unhappy people, whom, if they are to be punished for doing what they could not avoid, you reduce to the fate of the hapless mariner, who flings himself into a merciless ocean, to escape the conflagration of his ship !

To these reasons for rescinding the sentence you have pronounced upon the unhappy burghers, let me add the mistaken policy of putting it into execution. Could such dreadful punishment crush all opposition ; could interest even shade the inhumanity of the deed, and plead in some manner your excuse to the world ; could you hope in future that your arms would be crowned with success, yet, even were these suppositions true, a wounded conscience would still reproach you with such an ungenerous action ; the very foundation of sovereignty, the people's love, would sink into a shadow ; and the idea of being an execrated king, would deprive Edward of the fruits of his victory ! But, experience forbids these suppositions ! Victory is fickle ; and, for aught our narrow foresight can perceive, she may rest to-morrow on the standard of Philip. Should this happen, and the madness of passion urge you to the immediate execution of those

illustrious citizens—what may be the consequences? Alas! my tongue fails, and my blood is frozen at the thought!—May not a torrent of English blood—but I will not pain you with my suggestions; I will invite, solicit, on my knees entreat you to revoke a sentence which dishonours you, and to endeavour, by lenity to obtain, what from cruelty you can never hope. Trust me, sir, cruelty will beget complaint, and the hundred tongues of complaint, will speak and be heard, tho' all mankind were deaf. Be not obstinate, then, nor hope by rigour, to intimidate your opponents; for, from the moment you begin to persecute, you will give existence to an Hydra, which, though you were another Hercules, shall mock the inability of your arm! Besides, my lord, consider how the world would reflect upon your character. Because you are here superior to the controul of law, would you, therefore, renounce the feelings of a man, or the generosity of a conqueror? would you enable the public to say, that you became a tyrant, because you might be a tyrant with impunity? no! my lord, this were a species of infamy and cowardice, you can never stoop to: it were an example of such cruelty and vice, as you can never set before a generous people. The brave man is always merciful; and the more power he has to punish, the less will he exert it! The time has been when you thought thus; when I have known compassion, in some

measure, convert you into the person of the sufferer : when you have melted at distress, and, being convinced there were more opportunities to injure than assist, you exulted in the moment of communicating happiness. Am I not still to think that benevolence subsists in your nature, and that you struggle against its influence, but from private and partial motives ? conquer these, my Edward, if such there are—shew for what rectitude and dignity you were formed—be equitable, and be—yourself !

Hitherto that happy continence of mind has been yours, which could neither be elated by the syren smiles of prosperity, nor depressed by the frowns of disappointment ! you have possessed that gentle, but noble disposition—that wore honours without pride—supported power without insolence—and alike contemned the tyrant and the slave. But, alas ! my Edward, the picture seems reversed ; and as if you were intoxicated with success, you have almost forgotten that he is the meanest slave who cannot rule himself, and the worst of tyrants who punishes to display his power.

I would induce you, my lord, to consider how enviable you might make your station—That station gives you power—that power enables you to be merciful—and, in being merciful,

would you not emulate the most glorious attribute of heaven? mere power, my lord, is but an hungry vulture; but power with mercy is the bird of Jove with the heart of a dove—'Tis the true symbol of heaven—amiable tho' awful, and enticing even at the moment it commands. Power is for the man of reason, not for the tyrant—for him, who, happily subordinate to prudence, exerts it but to bless—Not for the being who confesses himself a slave to passion, and hopes to rush like a whirlwind to the gratification of his wishes, but creeps, alas! on the tardy limbs of the tortoise. Power, sir, is but a deposit in your hands; 'tis not your own, but originates with heaven, 'tis a delegated blessing for the good of thousands, and not a partial gift for the aggrandizement of one—and can you, then, convert this blessing into a curse, and, thwarting that benevolent will, which is infinite in mercy, at once o'erleap the bounds of so sacred a trust, and prostitute the noblest prerogative of kings, to enmity, and revenge?

You frown, my love! you chide me with your looks!—But know, my lord, tho' fate were in that frown; tho' every look were the look of a basilisk, still should sincerity be bold, and love importunate, while there remained an hope to the hapless Philippa of saving her Edward—from himself!—

What would you more? Calais is yours, and Valois trembles! Would you—but let not an echo waft it to the listening ears of Britain, for Britain is brave, but merciful as brave, invincible in arms, and as invincible in honour—would you—who taught the navy of your country to ride commandress of the seas; whose example gave vigour to the old, and courage to the young; who, scorning the puny artifices of France, would triumph by the deeds of manhood in the field, not by the insidious negociations of the politician in the cabinet—but, above all, would you—who saw your other self, * your son, my hero! my boy! vigour scarce ripened on his cheek, or manhood budded on his chin—would you—who beheld this eaglet of your own nest, this hero in nonage, shining amidst the glow of battle, and teaching France to crouch—would you, I say, degenerate into a coward, insult the vanquished, and with halters disgrace the necks of those, for whose brows, you should even pluck the laurel from thine own? but, what did I say?—nay, my lord, persist in your sanguinary purpose, and you shall at once create so many heroes to give splendor to the annals of history, and immortalize your own disgrace!

F

* Edward, the black prince.

O, sir, hard is my task; hard is the fate that obliges me to plead before you the cause of Virtue in distress! But, in the name of Consistency I beseech you, continue to hear me; you whom conquest, the most signal and honourable that history has to record, could not divert from the glorious purposes of humanity. For, was it not Edward that guided the battle at Cressy? and on the same scene, did not the same Edward, bid Victory pause, that he might assist the wounded, and give sepulture to the dead? Some days were spent in these ennobling works of piety; to the hero, how great! to the man, how glorious! Edward in arms, then outdid Edward—but Edward in mercy emulated heaven! How, my lord, can you forget that auspicious moment, which at once evinced your bravery and benevolence? or were the praises which the world bestowed, or the inward satisfaction experienced, so little to be wished for, that, now, when they might be renewed by the same humanity, they are disregarded and contemned? Look back, my lord, to past events; recall one of those the most signal, perhaps, that shall ennoble history. Your own feelings will inform you 'tis of Aiguillon * I would speak. Yes, my lord, the scene lives in idea; you see your gallant people endure all the miseries of a siege, with an

* A town of Agenois in France, which in 1346 held out a siege against John, duke of Normandy.

uncomplaining patience—you mark the inflexible loyalty of your soldiers, which, tho' their city has been stormed, one and twenty times in a week, is still able to repel Normandy, and repel him with disgrace—Is not this great—is not this glorious—it is! it is! for Edward assents with a tear!—O! then, my lord, be consistent; prize in Calais what you have honoured in Aiguillon, and, even in a foe, do justice to that spirit, which has so often conquered for you.

If, sir, I solicited any thing unreasonable—if my petitions were not sanctified by justice, and founded on truth—if it was a Nero, or a Dionysius I was entreating, my soul might bode a refusal! but, when the equity of my wishes cannot be denied—when Edward is my judge, am I to fear for the further miseries of the distressed? can you—who have been half an age seeking occasions to do good and performing it! can you—who, even Envy must confess, were never the enemy of justice—who added lustre to dignity by humanity and compassion—whose generous sympathy extended to all mankind—can you, I say, with a sordid littleness of mind, forget yourself in a struggle to overcome that spirit of philanthropy which ennobles every action—can your thoughts be a moment poised, when you reflect, that even the prerogative of conquest gives but a power over the freedom and property of

the captive? Yes, my lord, they have a right to the security of life—they have a right to more, much more, than upon an occasion of infinitely greater provocation, you performed without sollicitation: when Philip, the haughty Philip,* sacrificed his British captives to a sanguinary revenge—did Edward retaliate—no! with an heroism, worthy of himself, he subdued his resentment—he left the murders to the vengeance of heaven, and was rewarded with that sabbath of the mind, which is the constant enjoyment of the truly virtuous.

Still, my lord, my fears inform me, you are riveted to your purpose—If it be so—if your generosity cannot determine you—if, in this imaginary plenitude of power, you scorn adhering to that system, you so gloriously begun—if the wishes of your people, the prayers and intreaties of your child, and your wife, are unavailing—if you disregard the consequences of such an action—the hatred and contempt of France—the disaffection of England, taught no longer to esteem what she once adored—at least deceive not yourself with imaginary hopes of advantage; let not the gleam of a momentary thought give colour to such a deception—and,

* The king of France.

though you disregard the imbecility of a woman's arguments, disregard not the reproaches of the injured, or the feelings of a man; those feelings which yonder prospect might arouse, methinks, to tenderest sympathy—See Calais, how fallen!—see her pride humbled to the dust!—Here, Grief, sitting like an hermit, solicits sorrow to himself—there, gentle as a dove, Affection fixes her eyes on the beloved object—here, Age, in the bitterness of his heart, laments the tardiness of death—and there, Infancy smiles at its mother's woes—But look! my lord, 'tis Patriotism in the person of Vienne! his neck bound with a halter whose brows should be wreathed with everlasting laurel! Hark! he cries to his illustrious companions—“Is this the meed of an honourable resistance? is it
 “thus the gallant Edward deems of valour? and are we to
 “perish for being men? But, be it so—he shall see we are
 “not to fall unrevenged! and, even in our last agonies, we
 “will look with contempt on the merciless Briton—smile in
 “a consciousness of our own glory—and convince him that
 “virtue is happiness, even in death; and guilt, at best, but
 “splendid misery!”—If this prospect cannot excite, or this language command your feelings for such distress! proceed on your purposes—emulate the cruelty of Carthage! and while Envy exults in the ruins of your fame, enjoy the certainty of having obtained an immortality of disgrace—Will you not

proceed?—will you not perform the deed?—and, having triumphed over the feelings of nature, take Shame and Remorse for your eternal guests?—Nay, rash man, you shall not stir—Crush me! torture me in every nerve—but rush not upon your own disgrace! By all that is gentle and generous—by all that is merciful and forgiving—by all that is interesting and precious! I conjure you desist—free those captives—subdue your passions—and return to yourself—But, what do I see! a tear in my Edward's eye! and compliance smiling on his face! Yes! bountiful heaven! I am not deceived! Pierre is free—Philippa has succeeded, and Edward is the hero: For Edward hath conquered himself!



T H E E N D.